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# Frugal Funds Chief

George Herman Mahon

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WASHINGTON, May 12 — Under Congressional seniority rules, the prospective chairman of the House Appropriations Committee is George Herman Mahon, a 63-year-old Democrat of Texas. He was first elected Representative from Lubbock in the West Texas plains in 1934. He has

## Man in the News

been a member of the Appropriations Committee since 1940. But even without seniority, the chances are that this tall, stringy, quiet-spoken son of a Louisiana tenant farmer would have been the popular choice to succeed Clarence Cannon, who died this morning.

For one thing, Representative Mahon is well liked. He has been hailed on Capitol Hill and in the executive branch, by Republican as well as Democratic leaders, for his fairness as well as frugality.

Nor has it made much difference to him, when expressing his views, which part is in power. In 1960, he made a major speech on the House floor defending the Eisenhower Administration's basic defense program.

## Defended McNamara

Early in this Administration, when it suddenly became popular in Congress to assail Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, particularly on the controversial TFX warplane contract, Representative Mahon defended the secretary.

In addition, as chairman of the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee for Defense, the Texan is regarded as one of the most informed, as well as hard-working, budget watchers.

Each year his panel conducts hearings on the military appropriations legislation that accounts for more than half the Federal budget. In the last decade, he has had a major role in fashioning the nation's defense power with appropriations amounting to more than \$450 billion.

However, the enforced thrift of life on a small cotton farm has provided Representative Mahon with a built-in citizen's perspective for such huge sums.

He was born one of a family of four boys and three girls, on Sept. 20, 1900, in the village of Mahon near Homer in the Claiborne Parish of Louisiana.

His father, John Kirkpatrick Mahon, moved to Loraine, in Mitchell County, Texas, when George was 8. There the Mahons did well enough to buy their own farm. Once the elder Mr. Mahon took over his tall son's five-year-old cast-off trousers and wore them himself another five years.

George Mahon attended rural schools, starred in basketball and public speaking and acquired a teacher's certificate in his senior year in high school. He bicycled 14 miles a

As a farmer-teacher-lawyer in Colorado City, Tex., he was elected county attorney, then district attorney and, in 1934, a member of the House from the newly created 19th District. He married his childhood sweetheart, the former Helen Stevenson.

In his early days in Congress, he says, he felt frustrated over his inability to get on any important committees.

## Advised by Garner

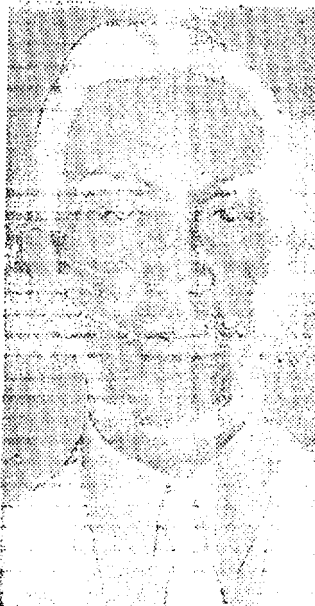
Former Vice President John Nance Garner, a fellow Texan, admonished him to have patience. When he was appointed to the Appropriations Committee, however, "I began to have the feeling that I belonged to the Washington show, and that I could have a role in it."

Six feet 2 inches tall but slim as a cowboy at 175 pounds, Representative Mahon keeps in trim with weekend golf. His partners at nearby Burning Tree Club include some of the richest and most prominent men in the Washington area, but he is not beyond bringing his sandwiches for lunch.

His friends call him "The Deacon." Mr. Mahon, who does not smoke or drink, is a former Methodist lay leader and still teaches Sunday school or Bible class when home in Texas.

He also makes a point of picking at least 100 pounds of cotton a year with his own hands, not so much for the exercise, but "so I won't forget that living on a farm is a strenuous life."

He and his wife, who live in a hotel apartment while in Washington have one married daughter and two grandchildren.



Associated Press

## Knowing budget-watcher

day to teach in grammar school.

With his earnings he worked his way through Simmons University, now Hardin-Simmons, and the University of Texas Law School.